

DAILY BULLETIN

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BUSH LOOKS TO G8 SUMMIT TO ADDRESS COMPLEX PROBLEMS

Says established democracies should help new democracies 1

SECRETARY RICE CONDEMNS TERROR ATTACKS IN INDIA

"We stand with India in this time of need," says Secretary Rice 2

GENEVA CONVENTIONS WILL APPLY TO DETAINEES, U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS

Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on military commissions processes begin 3

SISTER CITIES TO MARK 50 YEARS OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

Promoting peace, mutual respect, understanding, goals for projects 3

BUSH LOOKS TO G8 SUMMIT TO ADDRESS COMPLEX PROBLEMS

Says established democracies should help new democracies

By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington - From energy security to the possibility of pandemic flu, to potential threats from Iran and North Korea, it is best to work with friends and allies to solve world problems, President Bush told a panel of foreign journalists July 10 in Washington.

"These are issues which we will solve, and we're more likely to solve them more quickly when we work together," Bush said during a roundtable interview in advance of the Group of Eight (G8) summit, set for July 15-17 in St. Petersburg, Russia. He also said he would be sending a message at the summit that liberty is universal, and he will call on U.S. allies and established democracies to help young democracies grow.

Among the new democracies that need assistance are Iraq and Afghanistan, the president said. Asked about the possibility that the new Italian government might withdraw from Afghanistan, Bush said "every country gets to make its own mind what to do, but I would hope that those who are weighing whether or not it makes sense to stay or go look at the consequences of failure and realize the great benefits of liberty for the people of Afghanistan." He cited other topics that would be discussed at the G8 summit, including the Doha round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, and "common values" such as "transparency, anti-corruption, free markets --

values that tend to bind us and that can unite us in common purpose.”

“The world is complex. I’ve always felt like it’s best to work with friends and allies to solve the problems,” Bush said. He also mentioned that he and Mrs. Bush are looking forward to having dinner with Russian President Vladimir Putin and his wife, Ludmila, “which is a good chance to continue our friendship.”

“I’ve spoken to Vladimir Putin frequently over the last couple of weeks on a variety of subjects,” Bush said. He said it is in the United States’ interest for Russia to join the WTO. “It’s been a difficult negotiation,” Bush said, adding that “hopefully we can get it done. I’m optimistic about it.”

The president said he is comfortable working with new Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, even though he may disagree with them on some issues. Prodi has said he will pull all remaining Italian troops out of Iraq by the end of the year, and Merkel has been critical of the detainee center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Bush thanked Italy for its contributions in Iraq and said he hoped the Italian government would continue reconstruction aid and the training of Iraqi troops under NATO auspices. He also said he was looking forward to visiting Merkel in Germany “on her home turf” prior to the G8 meeting.

“I work hard to make sure that I’ve got good personal relationships with these leaders so we can solve problems,” Bush said. “Our objective with our European friends is to have a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace and is in close concert with the United States,” he said.

Bush also cited his friendship with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who visited the president in Washington recently. The two also toured Graceland, Elvis Presley’s mansion in Memphis, Tennessee.

“It’s in American interests that we work closely with Japan,” the president said. “It’s also in our interests that Japan have better relations with China and South Korea.”

“I, of course, have said that to Prime Minister Koizumi,” Bush added. “It’s in our nation’s interest that our friends have good relations with other friends and acquaintances.”

This is important because China has developed a relationship with North Korea that might help bring that country to the negotiating table over North Korea’s nuclear weapons, Bush said.

“Diplomacy takes awhile,” Bush said. What the world is watching now is diplomacy in action, he said.

SECRETARY RICE CONDEMNS TERROR ATTACKS IN INDIA

“We stand with India in this time of need,” says Secretary Rice

By Anita N. Wadhwani
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice denounced the July 11 train bombings in Mumbai, India as a “terrible terrorist incident.”

“We have great sympathy for and send condolences to the families of those who were killed and to those who have been injured,” Rice told reporters July 11.

The secretary also released an official statement in response to a train bombing and grenade attack in the India-controlled Kashmir province, which took place the same day, “Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. There is no political cause that can justify the murder of innocent people. The United States stands with India in the war against terror. Those responsible for these terrible acts should be swiftly brought to justice.”

According to press reports, a series of seven explosions killed more than 140 people and wounded close to 300 others on crowded commuter trains and stations in India’s financial capital, Mumbai. The bombings occurred during rush hour and hit the Khar, Mahim, Matunga, Jogeshwari, Borivili and Bhayander stations while another explosion struck a train between the Khar and Santacruz stations.

Officials at the State Department regard the bombings as acts of terror and say that there is no information at this time on the party or parties responsible. “It simply shows that this kind of hideous incident can happen anywhere in the world against innocent people, and so we stand with India in this time of need,” said Rice.

GENEVA CONVENTIONS WILL APPLY TO DETAINEES, U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS

Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on military commissions processes begin

By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England has ordered Defense Department personnel to treat detainees from the War on Terror in accordance with guidelines established by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

In a Pentagon memo issued July 7, England requested that staff “promptly review all relevant directives, regulations, policies, practices and procedures under your purview to ensure that they comply with the standards of Common Article 3.”

Common Article 3 states that detainees must be treated humanely and be afforded the same judicial guarantees “which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.”

On June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court said military commissions to try Guantanamo detainees were unconstitutional because they violated this article of the Geneva Conventions. The Senate Judiciary Committee July 11 held the first of what likely will be many congressional hearings about how to develop a constitutional process for trying detainees in light of the court’s decision.

The Supreme Court ruling “gives Congress and the administration a clear opportunity to work together to address the matters raised by the case, including the appropriate procedures governing military commissions,” Steven Bradbury, acting assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Counsel told the lawmakers. These procedures include determining how to use hearsay evidence and classified information at a trial, Bradbury said.

Trying al-Qaida members by the same procedures used by courts-martial is not required by the Constitution and would risk revealing sensitive intelligence sources and methods, Bradbury said.

Principal Deputy Counsel for the Defense Department Daniel Dell’Orto, also testifying before the committee, said military commissions, rather than courts-martial, are

the preferred way to try detainees. “Full application of court-martial rules would force the government either to drop prosecutions or to disclose intelligence information to our enemies in such a way as to compromise ongoing or future military operations,” Dell’Orto said, adding that “military necessity demands a better way.”

The use of U.S. military tribunals dates back to the days of George Washington, Dell’Orto said. Aside from military commission procedures, existing Department of Defense orders, policies and directives already comply with Common Article 3 standards, England said in his memo.

SISTER CITIES TO MARK 50 YEARS OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

Promoting peace, mutual respect, understanding, goals for projects

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- As representatives of the global “sister cities” movement gather in Washington July 13-15 to mark the 50th anniversary of President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s White House Conference on Citizen Diplomacy, sister-city programs worldwide continue to link cities and people in educational, cultural and economic activities.

More than 1,000 sister-city activists from around the world are expected to attend the celebration. The festivities will include a conference entitled “A Historic Event for the Future of Citizen Diplomacy.”

Pulitzer Prize historian Michael Beschloss is scheduled to deliver the keynote address to an audience from approximately 30 countries. Dignitaries scheduled to address the gathering include Dina Habib Powell, assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs. Several members of Congress also have been invited to speak.

Other key elements of the celebration will include a Raise My Voice Campaign to enroll thousands of new citizen diplomats in international activities and a National Summit on Citizen Diplomacy offering practical workshops to assist delegates in spreading the reach of the sister-city program and citizen diplomacy.

SISTER-CITY CONCEPT

The idea of “twinning” a community with a foreign counterpart is believed to have originated during the World War II. In 1944, the Canadian port city of Vancouver became sister city to the recently liberated Soviet port city of Odessa. Vancouverites sent badly needed reconstruction supplies and held an “Odessa Week” to celebrate Russian and Ukrainian culture.

With the war’s end, Europeans in particular embraced cross-border linkages between communities as a means of cultivating mutual understanding and forestalling another armed conflict. Thus, only two years after the conclusion of hostilities between Great Britain and Germany, Bristol, England, and Hanover, Germany, were twinned. The Bristolians sent food and clothing and the cities initiated a series of education exchanges. Today, an estimated 25,000 residents of the two cities have visited their sister city and contributed to a lasting international friendship.

In 1956, President Eisenhower initiated the U.S. “People-to-People” program, forerunner of the U.S. sister-city movement. “If we are going to take advantage of the assumption that all people want peace, then the problem is for people to get together and to leap governments ... to work out not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a little bit more of each other,” Eisenhower said.

In 1967, Sister Cities International (SCI) was founded. The nonprofit citizen diplomacy network encourages sister-city partnerships between U.S. and international communities and works to “promote peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation -- one individual, one community at a time.”

Among SCI’s programs is Wheelchairs for Peace, a five-year effort to distribute wheelchairs to sister-city communities throughout the world. Through this initiative, American communities have supplied wheelchairs to their sister cities in China, Morocco, Peru, Moldova, Poland, Mexico, Lebanon, Mali and South Africa, among others.

American towns and cities help their sister cities in a number of ways. Engineers from Portland, Maine, for example, have worked to increase and improve the potable water supply at a hospital in Portland’s sister city in Haiti, Cap-Haitien. Denver donated a septic truck to Axum, Ethiopia, where lack of a sewer system has led to sanitation problems. Fort Lauderdale, Florida, has spear-

headed an Internet access and training center in Agogo, Ghana.

The sister-city movement today reaches 2,500 communities in 134 countries.

ONE CITY’S EXPERIENCE

While a helping hand always is appreciated, sister-city relationships are about mutual benefit and enrichment. The links forged by one U.S. community, the city of Fort Worth, Texas, illustrate the rich variety of ties.

In 1985, Fort Worth entered into its first sister-city relationship, with Reffio Emilia, Italy. The two communities since have engaged in a wide variety of educational, cultural and sporting exchanges, including a Handicap Life Skills Symposium and a Wheelchair Basketball Tournament. Two years later, Fort Worth and Nagaoka, Japan, became sister cities. In addition to an annual two-week educational exchange, the cities exchange experts in firefighting, rescue and Red Cross training.

Since 1987, Fort Worth and sister city Trier, Germany, have exchanged university students, musical and ballet companies and even exhibits of regional cuisines. A sister-city arrangement signed in 1990 with Budapest, Hungary, (the first between an American and a Hungarian city) brings students from the TCI Cliburn Piano Institute (now known as Piano Texas) to Hungary and Franz Liszt Academy Scholars to Fort Worth.

In 1990, Fort Worth became the first U.S. community to partner with an Indonesian counterpart. The sister-city tie to Bandung has created student internships in the fields of municipal waste water treatment, security and management, medical and nursing training programs, and a variety of economic, sports and cultural exchanges.

As the international SCI delegates celebrate their organization’s first 50 years, their real successes -- whether measured in artists performing, wheelchairs delivered or minds opened, demonstrate the value of international exchanges.

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes repeatedly has endorsed people-to-people exchanges. “The more we know each other, the better we will understand each other,” she told a group of young Moroccan women.

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